

EXAMPLE INDIVIDUAL REVIEWER FORM – PROGRAM DESIGN

For Training Purposes

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: *WE can Help Services Inc.*
Reviewer Name: I. M. Helpful

Application ID: 13YZ100001
Panel #: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Program Design

Assess the extent to which the applicant addresses each of the Program Design elements. Provide comments and select a Rating for each element. All comments should address the significant strengths and weaknesses identified in your assessment that contributed to the selected Rating.

To what extent did the applicant's response address the following Selection Criteria:

I. NEED

The applicant provides persuasive evidence that the identified needs exist in the targeted community(ies). The applicant describes the community problem(s) they will work on. The applicant provides documentation of the extent/severity of the need in the target community. The applicant describes the target community including whether it is economically disadvantaged. The applicant explains why they selected this population to serve.

Select a Rating below

☐ Excellent (5) ☐ Above Average (4) ☒ Average (3) ☐ Below Average (2) ☐ Poor (1)

Provide comments to justify the Rating you selected:

(+/-) The statewide needs are compelling and supported by documentation of a significant waiting list of 21,000 for services for adults with developmental disabilities and a budget gap of \$20 per person served with disabilities, however, the applicant presents limited information about the need in the region that project will serve.

(+) The application provides general research from the Center on Human Policy from Syracuse University which supports a need for community integration of persons with disabilities as a tool to lead to employment and volunteer opportunities.

(-) The application does not include specific needs information related to the proposed project to build community support and partnerships for employment for persons with disabilities, nor does the application indicate an agency need to support the programs provided.

(-) It is unclear what the target region is for the services provided by AmeriCorps members.

(+/-) The applicant identifies a need for their program to offer support services for the developmentally disabled in West Carolina. However, it does not identify how that need translates to local services provided in the targeted population, discuss the actual needs of the developmentally disabled, or connect the need to outcomes.

II. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

The applicant describes AmeriCorps member activities, roles and/or responsibilities clearly and provides specific examples. The applicant describes what the organization will accomplish that it would not otherwise accomplish through existing staff and/or volunteers. The applicant describes the number of AmeriCorps members requested and what slot types are needed. If the applicant is requesting several different slot types, they describe how the proposed slot types align with their program design and activities.

Select a Rating below

Comment [FEP1]: This Rating was selected based on the quality of the applicant's response. It also aligns with the comments provided for Criterion I. Use the Rubric to ensure you are applying these Ratings appropriately.

Comment [r12]: Distinguishing strengths and weaknesses with a (+) or (-) is helpful. But combining them is not recommended. It would be better to break the comment into its two components.

Comment [r13]: This target population is a constituency, not a geographic region. However, it would be appropriate to comment that the applicant's description lacks details about the characteristics of this population in the cities where the program operates or in what ways they are a priority target for this project.

Comment [r14]: This comment belongs under Criteria III, not Criteria I because the referenced evidence supports the intervention of engaging people with disabilities rather than the need (need: that this population suffers from a lack of integration and other problems as a result.)

Comment [r15]: This is not a capacity building program so the program does not need to describe the agency's need to support the program. **Consult your POL if you have questions about this.**

Comment [r16]: This duplicates the comment above. This target population is a constituency, not a geographic region.

Comment [r17]: This is a circular argument. The need should not be expressed as the project's inability to provide services. The need should be based on the targeted beneficiary. If the applicant's documentation of need is an argument that they cannot provide services, then this is not a quality needs statement and the Reviewer should provide a Rating to reflect this. **Consult your POL if you have questions about this.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Above Average (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Average (3)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Below Average (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor (1)
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Provide comments to justify the Rating you selected:

(-) The applicant provides limited information on the role and activities of AmeriCorps members in serving as community advocates for persons with developmental disabilities and how this meets a need.

(-) It is unclear the specific role of the members in developing partnerships for employment and how this meets a community need.

(-) The applicant provides minimal information on the activities of AmeriCorps members as support workers in developing social and vocational skills for adults with developmental disabilities and it does not connect to an identified need.

(-) The applicant vaguely mentions obesity programs but this is not identified as a need nor is the role of the member in addressing the issue described.

III. EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The applicant describes how the interventions the AmeriCorps members and volunteers are engaged in are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. The applicant describes how the proposed interventions will have a measurable community impact and explains the impact of the AmeriCorps investment. The applicant describes the overall change they expect to see and what demonstrable impact their program will have. The applicant describes how they will measure that impact and how they determined their performance measure targets.

Select a Rating below

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent (5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Above Average (4)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Average (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Below Average (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor (1)
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Provide comments to justify the Rating you selected:

(+) Helping people with developmental disabilities become part of a community demands more than simply taking people out of institutions and placing them in the community, according to a study by Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor of the Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University.

(+/-) The applicant provides general evidence of impact through measurement of changes in community perception using a board certified behavior analyst tool however it is unclear how this tool links to any of the needs that are referenced in the application.

(+/-) The applicant provides general information on the impact of support services leading to employment or volunteer opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities however there is no indication of an evidence based model or historical data on the organizations impact using their model included in the application.

Total Score: __ (of 15)

*USE OF COMMENTS FOR APPLICANT FEEDBACK

After the panel discussion and finalizing your assessment, your comments will be used as part of a summary for the purpose of applicant feedback.

Comment [FEP8]: This Rating was selected based on the quality of the applicant's response. It also aligns with the comments provided for Criterion II. Use the Rubric to ensure you are applying these Ratings appropriately.

Comment [r19]: It is good to use adjectives such as "limited," "unclear" and "minimal" and avoid words such as "fails to" or "does not" when there is likely some mention – just not sufficient description to meet the criteria.

Comment [r10]: The specific example that the applicant gave with the recycling at businesses could be a problem if the business normally has to pay for recycling. This could indicate the potential for the activity to provide a direct benefit to businesses, which would be a prohibited activity. Flag concerns about these such items with your POL to verify.

Comment [r11]: The comment is confusing, as it is objective and overarching and yet specific as to what was missing.

Comment [r12]: This comment should be deleted because it relates to an insignificant weakness in the application since obesity is not the main focus of this program.

Comment [FEP13]: Copying information from the application does not qualify as your assessment, nor should it serve as a strength or weakness. This is not helpful. We need you to answer the "so what" question about this information—what is good or not good about this as it relates to the Criteria?

Comment [r14]: The use of +/- is confusing; "General evidence" does not appear to be a significant strength. Breaking it into two will help you determine if both parts are significant or if the (+) is merely an attempt to soften the weakness.

Comment [r15]: The study from the Center on Human Policy is evidence of the intervention more than (or in addition to) the need. The strength in the Need section about this evidence contradicts it being listed here as a weakness.

Comment [r16]: Information about current programs, such as the recycling program described under "added value", can be used to demonstrate success. However, general proclamations of success or impact without any data are not very meaningful.

EXAMPLE APPLICATION for Individual Review Form
For Training Purposes
WE can Help Services, Inc. Proposal – App ID#12YZ100001

A. NEED

East and West Carolina have increasing difficulty providing quality community services for adults with developmental disabilities. Intensifying the problem is the growing number who require more services at a time when state budget deficits are forcing funding cuts that strain existing benefits. The system as it exists is unable to serve new adults.

The *East Carolina* Department of Human Services has a waiting list of over 21,000 seeking services and yet the department says that state budget deficit and funding priorities have prevented the state from placing non-emergency placements since June 2010.

West Carolina is facing a projected \$1.5 billion state deficit for 2012. According to statewcline.org, that deficit represents more than 45% of all state spending last year, making *West Carolina* the worst state in the nation by that measure. Only two other states have deficits of as much as 30% of the prior year's spending. Assembly Speaker *Ivan Knos* said that despite deep cuts in education, health services and public safety the state continues to go deeper in debt and across the board 10 percent cuts will not balance the budget, as *West Carolina* law requires.

In *East Carolina* the primary funding mechanism for community services for adults with developmental disabilities is the federal-state Home and County Based Services (HCBS). A budget gap analysis study conducted in 2008 by Human Services Research Agency showed that in 2004, *East Carolina* spent \$111 per citizen for developmental disabilities services, 17.6 percent below the national average of \$131.

Disability advocates describe the experience of a young adult who comes to the end of his or her mandated educational services on their 22nd birthday as "falling off a cliff." Young people who want to continue lives in the community that they enjoyed as youth, are left isolated and idle, often losing skills they worked hard to gain.

WE can Help Services Inc., a nonprofit, non-sectarian organization, is very familiar with the dire needs in *East and West Carolina*. In the areas of City1/City2 in *East Carolina*, and City3, City4, City5, and City6 in *West Carolina*, *WE can Help Services* provides residential and day program services to about 800 adults with developmental disabilities; and we seek to build partnerships with other non-profit and for profit business to provide those served with employment, vocational, recreational and socialization opportunities in the communities where they live.

B. VALUE ADDED: AMERICORPS MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AmeriCorps members will act as bridges between the community and adults with developmental disabilities by developing relationships with community organizations and businesses with the goal of helping organizations understand the value and importance of adults with developmental disabilities in promoting human well-being for all. These relationships will earn social capital for adults with developmental disabilities and provide them with greater access to community employment, socialization and recreation.

An example is a community recycling program implemented by *WE can Help Services*. *West Carolina*. In this program, volunteers helped contact businesses establishing a program where people served by *WE can Help Services* go into enrolled businesses each week to collect paper, cans and bottles for recycling. As a community service, *WE can Help Services* program participants deposit the recyclables in collection points for schools and non-profits. Through this program, new job and volunteer opportunities were developed for persons served. Friendships were

Comment [FEP17]: Some applicants will organize their application with labels, some may not. Either way, you may find relevant information in another section of the application. This is allowable and although difficult to locate, it must be factored in your assessment.

begun. Due to this activity, *WE can Help Services* program participants are employed delivering phone books to businesses. They have been invited by the City8 Chamber of Commerce, city 8 Library, city 8 Woman's Club and Improvement Association to participate in volunteer work in a Summer Reading Program, Homecoming and community Breakfast.

People with developmental disabilities are not yet fully accepted members of the community. In fact, they may be the last unprotected group from discrimination -- Neighbors legally object to them as neighbors, City Councils legally pass legislation keeping group homes out of their communities. Perhaps even the Americans With Disabilities Act has done little to help the general public understand the value and joy of associating with these most innocent and vulnerable members of society.

A lawsuit is powerful, but gently helping the community to better know and understand who adults with developmental disabilities are, is far most powerful and lasting.

There remains a lack of knowledge and understanding of who they are. As examples of this, *WE can Help Services* program participants, without advocates and relationship building, have been rejected by neighborhood groups, Civic Center memberships, participation in Senior Center activities and dances.

The ten AmeriCorps members (Community Volunteer Organizers) will go before adults with developmental disabilities to establish personal and business relationships as they facilitate opportunities for community integration. Ten AmeriCorps Community Volunteer Organizers will go with adults with developmental disabilities into community volunteer and business opportunities as partners, assisting them and teaching them in every aspect of the community work and socialization.

C. EVIDENCE-BASED

The interventions of AmeriCorps Community Volunteer Organizers will be measured by increased community volunteerism (100 hours per month per site), community involvement (five new business partners per site), increased friendships and integration in the communities where they live. Progress will be documented through community surveys to measure perceptions of *WE can Help Services* programming in each of the five communities. The target goal is 70% positive recognition. *WE can Help Services* employs the philosophy of Best Practices and employs Board Certified Behavior Analysts to provide data collection-based guidance for members working with people with developmental disabilities.

Helping people with developmental disabilities become part of a community demands more than simply taking people out of institutions and placing them in the community, according to a study by Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor of the Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University.

It's possible for people to live in the community and experience isolation and loneliness. Being part of the community includes the opportunity to interact and form meaningful relationships with others and to contribute to the community.

What's needed is "a sociology of acceptance." Earlier studies showed that people with disabilities have been excluded and stigmatized. Although our society has shown it understands the damage that labeling and stereotyping can do, we still don't understand how people can make friends and become accepted.

People with developmental disabilities need extra support for this to occur, say Bogdan and Taylor. With greater support to access the community, people with developmental disabilities will become less dependent. But even more important, helping people become part of the community leads to better more fulfilling lives.

Being part of the community is not an unrealistic goal, as *WE can Help Services'* City8 program has proven.

Community relationships developed by staff provided a foundation of community acceptance which led to providing approximately 40 program participants with employment and volunteer opportunities.